Bodies of Evidence. Ancient Anatomical Votives Past, Present and Future

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Dedicating objects to the divine was a central component of both Greek and Roman religion. Some of the most conspicuous offerings were shaped like parts of the internal or external human body: so-called ‘anatomical votives’. These archaeological artefacts capture the modern imagination, recalling vividly the physical and fragile bodies of the past whilst posing interpretative challenges in the present. This volume scrutinises this distinctive dedicatory phenomenon, bringing together for the first time a range of methodologically diverse approaches which challenge traditional assumptions and simple categorisations. The chapters presented here ask new questions about what constitutes an anatomical votive, how they were used and manipulated in cultural, cultic and curative contexts and the complex role of anatomical votives in negotiations between humans and gods, the body and its disparate parts, divine and medical healing, ancient assemblages and modern collections and collectors. In seeking to re-contextualise and re-conceptualise anatomical votives this volume uniquely juxtaposes the medical with the religious, the social with the conceptual, the idea of the body in fragments with the body whole and the museum with the sanctuary, crossing the boundaries between studies of ancient religion, medicine, the body and the reception of antiquity.

About the editors

Jane Draycott is Lord Kelvin Adam Smith Research Fellow in Ancient Science and Technology at the University of Glasgow, UK. Her research focuses on health and well-being in antiquity. She has published on a wide range of subjects relating to the history and archaeology of medicine.

Emma-Jayne Graham is Senior Lecturer in Classical Studies at The Open University, UK. Her research focuses on the archaeology of Roman Italy, with a particular interest in the treatment of the body and its representation in material culture. She has published on mortuary practices, infant health and death, sensory experience and the materiality of votive religion.
ABSTRACTS

The papers presented in this volume are the result of the conference Bodies of Evidence: Re-defining Approaches to the Anatomical Votives that was held at the British School in Rome in 2012. Additional papers are also included.

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